

VZCZCXR00144

RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW RUEHLA

RUEHLM RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG

DE RUEHSK #0956 3231548

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

R 191548Z NOV 07

FM AMEMBASSY MINSK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6659

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0369

RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 1734

RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE

RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS MINSK 000956

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PHUM PINR BO

SUBJECT: AMNESTY BILL PASSES UPPER HOUSE, NO RELIEF FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS

Ref: Minsk 898

(SBU) The appointed upper house of the Belarusian parliament, the Council of the Republic, unanimously passed an amnesty bill November 16. No changes were made to the draft that previously passed parliament's lower house October 24; the draft will become law when signed by the president. The bill reportedly would grant amnesty to up to 2,550 persons and would save the GOB approximately BYR 2 billion (USD 930,000) annually. This amnesty is unlikely to extend to Belarus' six internationally recognized political prisoners (reftel) as they either have been cited for severe violations of prison administrative rules or have not already served one-third of their sentences.

Stewart